1. Why do I have to complete a declaration of health form before I start an Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course?

All applicants for Initial Teacher Training (ITT), including routes such as Teach First and School Direct, must complete an assessment to ensure that they meet the Secretary of State’s requirements for physical and mental Fitness to Teach.

Teachers, and those training to become teachers, need a high standard of physical and mental fitness to enter the teaching profession. Teaching is a demanding career and teachers have a duty of care towards the pupils in their charge. The health, education, safety and welfare of pupils, is taken into account when your Fitness to Teach is assessed.

2. Who gets my information?

Your answers are confidential and your completed health declaration form is assessed by the University Medical Officer and stored securely during your course and for three years following completion of your course.

3. What happens if I don’t complete my declaration of health assessment?

You must complete the declaration of health form prior to starting your first placement. The University has a responsibility to partnership schools and the pupils attending those schools that our trainees on placement are fit to train to teach and where appropriate, have put in place reasonable adjustments to manage the impact of any disability, medical condition, or mental health issue on their teaching.

You must meet all conditions of entry to be fully registered on your course. If you are not fully registered you will not be eligible to receive any funding – including the ITT bursary from the National College for Teaching and Leadership (for PGCE students) and all loans and grants from Student Finance England or other relevant funding body. If you fail to satisfy this condition, you could be withdrawn from your studies after 4 weeks of teaching.

4. What does the assessment involve?

The information contained within your health declaration form will be assessed by the University Medical Officer. The assessment outcome could be ‘passed fit’ with no further information required or the outcome could be ‘further information required’. If further information is required to make an assessment, you will be asked to provide a letter from your GP, on receipt of the information from your GP the University Medical Officer will assess whether you are ‘passed fit’ or to refer you to the University Occupational health provider for further review. You would then be contacted by the Occupational health provider to attend an occupational health assessment.
5. What happens after a referral to an Occupational Health Adviser?

Once the assessment process is complete, you will receive an email from Leeds Trinity University informing you of the outcome, which will fall into one of three groups:

a. Fit to Teach: you are in good health and free from conditions that might be likely to interfere with efficiency in teaching.

b. Fit to Teach with reasonable adjustments: you are in good health but have conditions which are likely to affect your ability to teach either all subjects, or certain specified subjects. However, these conditions are not serious enough to make you unfit for the teaching profession. This includes some disabled people who need reasonable adjustments to enable them to provide effective and efficient teaching.

c. Unfit to Teach: your condition makes you unfit for the teaching profession. You will not normally be included in this category unless you have a condition likely to interfere seriously with regular and efficient teaching of either general subjects, or the subject you intend to specialize in (e.g. P.E. or science subjects), or you have a condition that may carry a risk to the safety or welfare of the pupils.

6. What happens if I don't disclose a disability, long-term medical condition, or mental health issue?

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) individuals have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own and other people's health and safety at work. In addition, schools, academies and colleges have a statutory responsibility for 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people' (Education Act, 2002). If you have a disability, long-term medical condition, or mental health issue which has a bearing on your occupational health, you are required to disclose these on the health declaration questionnaire. If you decline to disclose a condition which affects your Fitness to Teach, or give false information then it may affect your ability to continue with your studies.

On a more practical level it also prevents you from accessing any support that you would be legally entitled to during your training under the Equality Act (2010). According to this legislation, the University and partnership schools are required to make reasonable adjustments to support any student disclosing a disability, long term medical condition, or mental health issue.

7. What happens if I do disclose a disability, long-term medical condition, or mental health issue?

If you have a disability, medical condition, or mental health issue then it's likely that the University Medical Officer will request that you provide appropriate medical evidence of your condition from your GP or Consultant and refer you to our external Occupational Health provider for a further assessment before a final decision is made. This is an opportunity to identify support needs or reasonable adjustments, which may be required.

If any need for support or reasonable adjustment is identified as part of your Occupational Health assessment, contact the Dyslexia & Disability Support service to discuss how this can be implemented during your studies.

8. What kind of support can I access?

The support you can access will depend on your individual circumstances, so you should liaise with Dyslexia & Disability Support services at Leeds Trinity University about your needs. You may be eligible for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs) Examples of the type of support available are as follows:

- help with travel costs if you are unable to use public transport
- assistive technology software
- specialist ergonomic equipment
- Sessions with one-to-one study skills support tutors or specialist mentors

9. What if my health circumstances change during my period of study?

If there is a change in your health after you have been passed fit to train to teach with or without adaptations (e.g. you are diagnosed with a long-term serious medical condition), you should contact Student health and advise them of your change in circumstance, they will send out a new declaration of health form for you to complete. Your completed declaration of health form will be re-referred to the University Medical Officer for assessment. Further reports may be required from a GP or Consultant and you may be referred for an Occupational Health assessment, which will enable us to advise and support you based on your new circumstances.
10. Are there any conditions which will automatically prevent me from pursuing an Initial Teacher Training course?

There is no specific list of conditions incompatible with teaching. If you have any concerns, then you can discuss them with Leeds Trinity University Dyslexia & Disability Support services. The Dyslexia and Disability staff can be contacted by ringing them on 0113 2837138 or e-mailing them at disability.support@leedstrinity.ac.uk.

11. Will my placement school be informed about the outcome of my assessment?

Not without your agreement. Under the Data Protection Act (1998), information about impairments is considered ‘sensitive information’, which means that it cannot be passed onto anyone else without explicit and informed consent. Candidates therefore have the right to ask that such information be treated as confidential.

Occupational Health will pass on information given ‘in confidence’ only if there is a significant identified risk to the candidate/trainee concerned, or to pupils or others.

If you have been identified as Fit to Teach with reasonable adjustments, you should contact Dyslexia & Disability Support to discuss the support we can offer you and decide whether disclosure to the placement school or college is essential. Dyslexia & Disability Support can advise you on a disclosure plan.

With your agreement a Learning & Teaching Support Agreement can be drawn up to outline support available. We can also address a section to the PCM (Professional Co-ordinating Mentor) at your school or college. This will outline suggestions for your support whilst on placement.

It should be noted that some impairments must be disclosed to the school and that your ability to succeed at your placement may be compromised if you are unwilling to disclose and accept the reasonable adjustments offered.

If you are found “Unfit to teach” you will not be able to start your placement. Your course team and Leeds Trinity University Dyslexia & Disability Support services will then work with you to decide whether you should withdraw from the course or defer/ suspend studies and undergo another Occupational Health assessment at a more appropriate time.

Additional information:

• Able to Teach: Guidance for Providers of Initial Teacher Training on Disability Discrimination and Fitness to Teach. Teacher Training Agency (2007)

• Education Act (2002)

• Equality Act (2010)

• ITT criteria supporting advice (July2013)

• Physical and Mental Fitness to Teach and of Entrants to Initial Teacher Training. Circular No: 4/99 Department of Education and Employment (DfEE)

CONTACT US:

Dyslexia & Disability Support
disability.support@leedstrinity.ac.uk
Tel: 0113 283 7138

Admissions
admissions@leedstrinity.ac.uk
Tel: 01132 837123

University Medical Officer c/o
Student Health Adviser
l.green@leedstrinity.ac.uk
Tel: 01132 837262

(Please note that the Health Adviser works term time only and will not be available over the summer)